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AUTHOR Pattavina, Paul
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ABSTRACT

Specific generic affective competencies are those skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are important for a teacher's successful dealing with affective domain behaviors of exceptional students. These skills are used for teaching new behavior, establishing relationships, and setting behavioral limits. Affective competencies are related to student learning in the areas of: (1) motivating; (2) rewarding for correct responses and adaptive behavior; (3) involving students' interest and attention in learning activities and school; (4) managing crisis behaviors; (5) perceiving needs and experiences which students exhibit during learning and socialization activities; and (6) demonstrating or modeling optional ways of responding to stress and solving problems. This paper lists 41 generic competency statements for use in the following: establishing climate, trust, and rapport; managing conflicts and crises; and using positive classroom practices. Examples are given of how these competencies may be applied during teaching activities.

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Generic affective competencies: a
description of applied teaching behaviors

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Paul Pattavina, Ph.D.
CONSORT II Project
University of Texas at Dallas

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Introduction

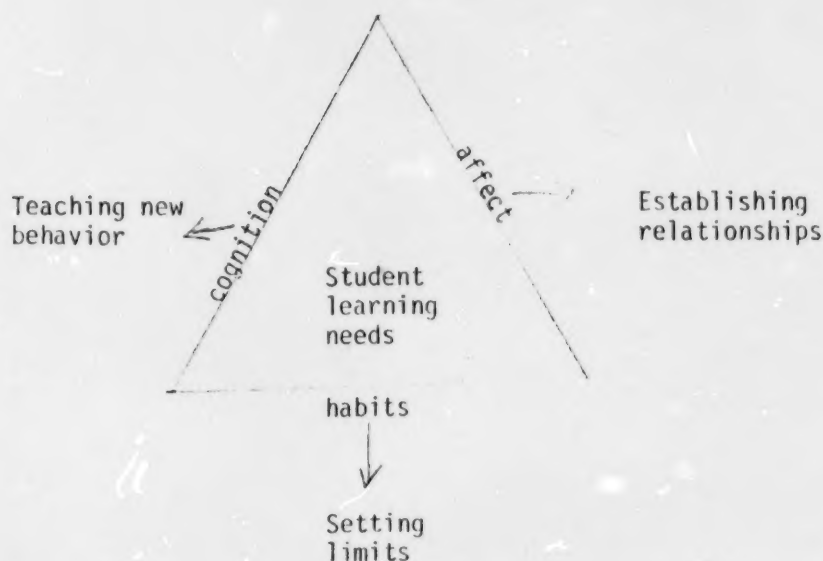
Youngsters who are characterized by any of the classifications of learning handicaps are especially vulnerable to situations and experiences that precipitate the kinds of social and emotional conflicts which inhibit learning. Such students may vary considerably in the kinds and degrees of affective competence that would enable them to either a) 'achieve' a range of learning objectives or b) 'experience' and 'exhibit' personal efficacy in a range of social and learning situations. The more frequently, chronically and intensely (Pattavina and Gotts, 1979) that a youngster's affective functioning conflicts with learning, the more likely it is that such a youngster will be characterized further by academic retardation, limited intellectual development and inadequate preparedness for adult adjustment (Robins, 1966; Bruner, 1971; Gallagher and Harris, 1976; Morse, 1979; 1977; Schafer and Polk, 1967; Balthazar and Stevens, 1975).

Learning in general, whether academic, social or emotional, has been attributed to 1) the individual student's capacities for amounts and rates of growth in the interrelated domains of affect, psycho-motor behavior and cognition and 2) environmental factors that stimulate growth at different stages of development. This view of learning, in other words, assumes that individuals are mediating organisms who are continually acting and reacting to external events and stimuli, as well as to internal phenomena and information processing capacities that develop with age, exposure and teaching in a systematic and spiralling fashion (Rosenburg, 1978; Mahrer, 1978; Izard, 1977; Mischel, 1977; Spivack and Shure, 1976; Klausmeier, Ghatala and Frier, 1974; Rosenthal, 1970; Erikson, 1968; Bruner, Goodnow and Austin, 1956).

Relatedly, there are three major areas of teaching effectiveness that seem generic across role functions of regular and special education teachers. The assumed relationship between the learning needs of handicapped youth and teacher competencies is depicted in figure 1 following (Gotts, Pattavina, Goodman and Rodriguez, 1978).

Figure 1

Relationship between teaching competencies and learning needs of handicapped youth



Generic affective competencies: a common bond

"Generic affective competencies" (Gotts et al, 1978; Pattavina and Ramirez, 1980; Pattavina, 1981) are teaching skills that seem important for meeting a range of instructional objectives with affectively handicapped students, regardless of one's theoretical orientation. Three broad categories of affective teaching behaviors identified in the model are those required by any effective teacher who attempts to motivate, understand,

involve, manage and teach individuals who are vulnerable in educational settings. These major competency clusters and sub-clusters are listed in Table 1 following.

Table 1

Competency clusters and sub-clusters

- I. Establishing climate, trust and rapport
 - A. Developing communicative relationships in classroom interactions and activities
 - B. Enhancing agency, accountability, achievement and efficacy of individuals
 - C. Promoting relevance, reward and disposition in the instructional process
- II. Managing conflicts and crises
 - A. Using positive behavior management strategies and practices
 - B. Responding effectively to unacceptable behavior
- III. Teaching new affective behaviors
 - A. Assessing and evaluating the affective functioning and learning needs of individuals and groups
 - B. Organizing the physical and procedural environments for learning
 - C. Designing instruction for (primary and secondary) affective growth

The list of generic affective competency statements described in this report are the result of (1) a review of relevant literature, (2) direct observation, (3) consensual validation field testing, and (4) a revision of the competency statements based on the outcome of the consensual validation. Subsequent research activities being conducted or designed need to ultimately achieve an empirical validation of the competencies over a period of time. This will involve a need to determine the value of the GAC's for promoting child change, and the degree to which these competencies can be acquired by

individuals through training.

The specific generic affective competencies are those skills, knowledges and attitudes which are important for a teacher's successful dealing with affective domain behaviors of exceptional students. It may be that there is considerable commonality of these competencies with those required by any teacher to work effectively with affective domain behaviors of any secondary or elementary level students. In general, the importance of the affective competencies seems related to learning processes similar to those listed following.

- a) motivating (or activating a student's drive to achieve learning; complete tasks, etc.)
- b) rewarding students for correct responses and adaptive behavior
- c) involving student's interest and attention in learning activities and school
- d) managing crisis behaviors
- e) perceiving needs and experiences which students exhibit during learning and socialization activities
- f) demonstrating or modeling optional ways of responding to stress and solving problems

The competency statements developed through the process described in the preceding section are presented in Table 2 following. As already stated, the 'generic affective competency' model incorporates three broad domains of teaching behavior. These include (a) establishing climate, trust and rapport, (b) managing conflicts and crises, and (c) teaching new affective responses and behavior. In a general way, the first category relates to the student's 'affective' domain from an experiential frame of reference. The second category addresses the student's 'behavioral' domain. The third category encompasses the 'cognitive' domain, in reference to academic learning for secondary affective growth; and direct affective instruction for meeting a student's primary affective needs.

Table 2

"Generic affective competency statements" (n = 41)

I. Establishing Climate, Trust and Rapport

1. Use "accepting" rather than "rejecting" language
2. Focus on feelings and reflect them accurately
3. Plan for success by gearing expectations and activities to each student's level of achievement
4. Make use of students' interest to enhance the meaningfulness of activities
5. Involve students in creating limits and learning activities
6. Give clear, simple instructions, one at a time
7. Initiate contact with resistive students
8. Recognize and acknowledge student efforts
9. Give a student corrections without criticism

II. Managing Conflicts and Crises

10. Accept and recognize feelings accurately
11. Leave responsibility for resolution with the student
12. Communicate confidence in the student's ability to learn and grow
13. Invite, but do not force communication with a student
14. Maintain a goal-oriented, problem-solving approach to conflict
15. View conflict as an opportunity for student growth
16. Use "I messages" to convey feelings
17. Control personal impulses in order to choose a response which will de-escalate the conflict
18. Disengage from arguments to avoid power struggles
19. Recognize areas of least effectiveness regarding the management of student conflicts
20. Model effective alternatives for students to cope with conflict
21. Admit mistakes to students
22. Convey calm confidence during conflict and do not blame
23. Establish contact with a student after conflict with them

III. Using Positive Classroom Management Practices

24. Structure the environment and activities to facilitate group learning
25. Use questions rather than statements to remind students of limits
26. Depersonalize rules
27. Monitor several activities simultaneously
28. Be enthusiastic regarding activities
29. Selectively ignore behaviors that are not overly disruptive
30. Offer alternatives rather than commands
31. Remind students of previous successes
32. Use humor to decontaminate stressful situations
33. Control behavior through proximity and non-verbal feedback
34. Avoid punitive, rejecting and absolute responses
35. State expectations clearly and briefly
36. Give disciplinary feedback to students in private to avoid a ripple effect
37. Do not force students to make 'pledges of good conduct'
38. Allow students to search for alternatives to punishment
39. Reinterpret adult limits as protections
40. Leave responsibility for change with the student
41. Allow students to experience natural and logical consequences of behavior

Examples of how the generic affective competencies may be applied during teaching activities

1. Use accepting vs. rejecting language

"Good morning, good to see you" vs. "Not you again" is an example of how affective messages are communicated verbally. Though it may seem unlikely for any teacher to say something as obviously negative as the latter statement, it's important to understand that affective messages are also communicated non-verbally and through verbal intonations. Facial expressions and body language are two predominant ways that individuals communicate their feelings non-verbally.

2. Focus on feelings and reflect them accurately

'Reflection' is a technique that intends only to mirror another's behavior without expressing a positive or negative judgement. Oftentimes, this type of strategy will cause the other person to themselves reflect and "re-process" the information. As a result, they may qualify or elaborate their current experience. 'Reflective' strategies usually begin with statements such as, "You look..."; "You sound..."; "You seem...". In CRCS#6, "You seem angry about something" might be a most appropriate response to that student at that time.

3. Plan for success by gearing expectations and activities to student's level of achievement

Learning handicapped students at the secondary level may exhibit a range of achievement difficulties. Regardless of diagnostic labels, they are likely to be a heterogenous group who will need individualized instruction. It is most important, therefore, that a teacher can effectively accommodate the variety of needs through specific instructional activities and, conversely, avoid stereotyped or self-fulfilling expectations. Stated differently, a teacher will need to build upon existing students strengths and current levels of functioning, rather than basing instructional plans on normal age-grade

expectations.

4. Make use of student's interests to enhance optimal cognitive functioning during learning activities

- a) Clay is into 'science fiction' - reading and language development can be made palatable by designing learning activities around this content.
- b) Tommy wants to return to the mainstream. This generates heightened attention and motivation for tasks.
- c) Jack is into cars and mechanics. Reading and math activities concerned these topics.
- d) bibliotherapy
- e) (+) affects of goal-planning and expressed aspirations

5. Involve students in creating limits and learning activities

- a. class meetings
- b. Psycho-Ed Interview and collaborative IEP planning
- c. Have students attend ARD meeting

6. Give clear, simple instructions, one at a time

- a. Prepare study guide for students; with major points highlighted and summarized
- b. class rules posted, in clear, simple language

7. Initiate contact with resistive students

Students who are resistive to interacting may be responding to preemptive fear or anger/hostility. Proclaim to this student that you are open, non-judgemental, fair and willing to help. These kinds of students need to be taught how to establish positive-communicative relationships.

8. Recognize and acknowledge student efforts

- a. Successive approximation; reinforcement schedules
- b. Encouragement-type statements or non-verbal communication given to students while 'on task' (regardless of quality of performance).
- c. 'Catch' students being good.

9. Give corrections without criticisms
 - a. That's not exactly right, but close. Let me show you another way of doing or perceiving this (problem). Here's another way of trying to get the answer.
 - b. You're doing much better. Here's what's left to accomplish.
10. Accept and recognize feelings accurately
 - a. "I understand what makes you feel so (e.g. angry) at times like this."
11. Leave responsibility for resolution with the student

"These are your options at this time. I can't tell you what to do.
You need to do what's important to you."
12. Communicate confidence about student's ability to learn and grow
 - a. Allow students to assume responsibility for managing learning activities.
 - b. Praise and encouragement for adaptive behavior and correct responses.
13. Invite, but do not force communication

Inform students that you welcome (after class) meetings to clarify concepts; argue test-scores, etc., but you understand that forcing them to talk with you may yield only false compliance.
14. Maintain a goal-oriented, problem-solving approach to conflict

While it is relatively easy to respond to conflict with anger or a desire to punish, it is important to keep in mind that whatever problem between teacher and student that manifests as a 'conflict' has optional resolutions or ways of being solved. This 'problem' needs to be the focal concern, rather than becoming fixated on reactive feelings.
15. View conflict as an opportunity for growth

Recurrent conflicts suggest a need for affective learning or development. When a student is exhibiting recurrent conflict behavior, that may be the best time for the student to gain insight into the dynamics of that particular behavior.

16. Use I messages to convey feelings

This is also referred to as self-disclosure; or being open, honest and real. Use this tactic carefully and strategically. There's no need for teachers to reveal everything about their personal lives. In fact, certain things are best left a mystery. There would be some benefit to letting students know such things as your favorite season, colors, etc.; how you feel about important social issues; or how different student behaviors are making you feel. "I feel very (e.g. uncomfortable) with that behavior."

17. Control impulses in order to choose most effective response to de-escalate conflicts

Given a student's provocative behavior, (e.g. CRCS #3; 6) one might feel impulses to react with fear or anger. These impulses inhibit one's ability to think clearly or reason logically. By controlling these impulsive reactions, one has the opportunity to consider other response options.

18. Disengage from arguments to avoid power struggles

'Power struggles' are best understood from the perspective of interpersonal dynamics. These kinds of interactions can be seen as a 'game' where one person is attempting to win something, or benefit in some way at the expense of someone else. The 'pay-off', as it's called (Berne, 1964), is usually some type of feeling and/or belief concerning such things as control; mastery; security; superiority; anger; hostility; fear; revenge, etc. Teachers can avoid games as these by a) simply withdrawing from the argument (e.g. "I'm not going to argue with you about this (now)") or b) by stopping the game by not playing (e.g. "I'm not going to play this game - find someone else").

19. Recognize personal areas of ineffectiveness regarding student conflicts

Face it - nobody's perfect. It would be unrealistic for anyone to expect that all students will be liked by all teachers. Each of us has our own range of tolerance and skills that would effectively accommodate the needs of some,

though probably not all students. Unless our areas of intolerance and ineffectiveness are vast, they do not need to be viewed as 'devastating flaws.' It, nonetheless, is important to recognize these areas in order to understand possible needs for assistance. Self-evaluation of job-effectiveness seems integral to one's professional growth.

20. Model effective alternatives for students to cope with conflict

In CRCS #3 there are probably a number of students watching carefully to see how the teacher responds to this provocation. If we are expecting students to control impulsive behaviors, then we need to demonstrate such control ourselves.

21. Admit mistakes to students

a. You have made an assumption about a student and, subsequently, decide to treat that student a certain way (different from other students). Later you gain information that causes you to no longer believe what you had formerly assumed. Explaining this to a student will enhance your credibility.

b. Explain to students any kinds of mistakes you made when you were learning similar subjects; or when you were trying to adjust during adolescence.

22. Convey calm-confidence (i.e. shock-proofness) during conflicts and do not blame

Do not allow student provocations to generate impulsive reactions. (see #17)

23. Establish contact with a student once a conflict has subsided

Following a teacher-student conflict, the student may have 'residual (-) affect' (e.g. anger; shame; fear) which would inhibit communication being re-established. It's helpful to 'air' this kind of barrier with the student.

24. Structure the classroom and activities to facilitate group learning

Different kinds of learning activities will require differences in such things as a) arrangement of furniture, b) location of materials,

c) grouping of students. The classroom needs to be structured in such a way that allows flexibility in these areas. Group-acceptance will be an important issue for many learning handicapped students, thus, group learning activities can prove critical.

25. Use inductive questions rather than authoritative statements to remind students of limits

ED/SM adolescents may often react harshly to authoritative demands, depending, of course, on the nature of relationship existing between the student and teacher. If a learning goal for such students is to help them achieve 'self-control' then it will be important they learn to monitor, or mediate, their own behavior. Asking questions of a student seems to generate less hostility and reactivity. It forces them to 'make sense' out of what's going on at the time. In CRCS #1 it seems best to have the student explain her behavior rather than giving her the opportunity to provoke any further.

26. Depersonalize rules

Rules are developed to regulate the behavior of all the students in a class or school, not just for individual students. ED/SM students can sometimes feel "victimized" when told such things as, "You're not supposed to be doing that." Rules need to be understood as neutral in their orientation. A less personally threatening way of rule-reminding would be, ("Gun-chewing) is not allowed in class.")

27. Monitor several activities simultaneously (i.e. 'withitness')

With the advent of IEP^S for learning handicapped students, there will be a need for teachers to deviate from traditional group instruction. It is important that a teacher can effectively 'keep track', or supervise, a number of different learning activities taking place at the same time in different areas of the classroom. This requires effective grouping; materials preparation; and procedures for giving feedback to different students.

28. Express enthusiasm about activities

Motivation to learn or participate in learning activities can be inhibited for any number of different reasons, not all of which are in the control of a classroom teacher. Possibly the time of day; the nature of the activity; or prior events have caused one or more students to feel less than eager. At these times, a teacher's feelings or mood can affect student behavior in a critical way. If a teacher expresses apathy or tedium, as opposed to enthusiasm, student behavior is likely to follow the principles of 'contagion'. In my own teaching, I have no hesitance to pretend, suddenly, that I'm the emcee of an exciting T.V. show (e.g. "It's time for ...!").

29. Selectively ignore behaviors that are not overly disruptive

Reinforcement theory and research has indicated that many behaviors are strengthened by contingent responses from the environment. Teachers and parents have been observed to reinforce certain misbehaviors by merely reacting to them.

From a different theoretical perspective, one can speculate that certain behaviors are performed by students simply to get attention of any kind. It's important then for teachers to understand which behaviors will not 'get out of hand' and do not require an intervention.

From the standpoint of teacher energy, it will be impossible to respond to every form of misbehavior - carefully choose those that need teacher reactions.

30. Offer alternatives rather than commands

It's a free country and people don't have to do anything they don't want to. Students need to understand that there are most always alternative courses of action - options. Because many ED/SM students will need to become more accountable for their behavior, it seems important

that after informing them of options they make a choice about how they are going to behave. For example, in CRCS #6, the student can a) remain quiet, b) speak to a counselor, c) change her ways, d) leave class, e) continue to provoke, and become susceptible to whatever consequences are forthcoming.

31. Remind students of previous successes

For the sake of motivation and self-esteem it will be important that learning handicapped students maintain awareness of capabilities and strengths. When faced with new or difficult situations and learning activities, it may sometimes seem more comfortable to "lay down and play dead" than to "stick-out one's chin and dive headfirst into a challenge." Students will need to be "emotionally coached" (and coaxed), or supported. For example, "Remember how well you did (such and such)?"

32. Use humor to decontaminate stressful situations

When a teacher senses tension with an individual or group of students it may sometimes be helpful to 'lighten the mood.' Tension and stress are associated with anxiety, and learning hinges critically on the amount of anxiety being experienced. Laughter and humor has a way of relieving tension in individuals, and can change the course of what otherwise might be disastrous interaction.

33. Control behavior through proximity and non-verbal feedback

It is totally unnecessary for every misbehavior and emergent act of deviance to be verbally proclaimed in public. Many behaviors can be controlled or managed by the way you look at a student, or by standing next to an individual or group of students. This does not require the teacher to interrupt instruction and does not force the rest of the class to stop what they're doing to attend to the misbehavior. Fink et al (1976) described this as a 'neutral facilitator' strategy.

34. Avoid punitive, rejecting and absolute responses

ED/SM students don't need to be told that they will never be any good; or you never want to see them in your class or school again; or they will always be the way they are. It is usually a current behavior that causes teachers to react, regardless of how often that misbehavior has or hasn't been exhibited in the past. Allow students the opportunity to change by 'specifying' misbehaviors rather than generalizing that behavior as a way of describing the nature of that student. Always, things can change given enough time and the proper conditions.

35. State expectations briefly (i.e. verbal parsimony)

When directing the behavior of an individual or group of students, it's important this be done clearly and as briefly as possible. Do not confuse students with multiple orders, or excessive language that may only be grammatically related to what you want the student(s) to do.

36. Give students feedback in private to avoid a ripple effect

As described in a prior competency (#33), it is unnecessary for every student misbehavior to be proclaimed in public. When responding (-) to student's behavior, or giving feedback, it will sometimes prove most effective to do so privately with the student. The goal is to avoid any 'group contagion', or (-) 'ripple-effect.' From a different perspective, it may be very devastating for an individual to be humiliated in front of peers. Adding this dynamic to the interaction is probably unnecessary and confounding if it can be avoided. Private conferences during class; after school conferences; and whispering are useful.

37. Avoid extracting 'pledges of good conduct'

Coercing ED/SM adolescents into making promises they may not be able to keep, or have no intention of keeping, is a useless venture. As the saying goes, "Talk is cheap." If someone truly understands the in-

appropriateness of their behavior and wants to change that behavior, they will 'demonstrate' their intentions. Swearing on 'stacks of bibles' or 'relatives' graves' does not increase that probability in any way.

38. Allow students to search for alternatives to punishment

Since the effects of punishment are not always predictable, it will be beneficial wherever possible for optional learning experiences to be identified. The purpose of punishment is to help a student learn new behavior, albeit by demonstrating the ill effects of current behavior. Assuming that punishment is undesirable to the student, it follows logically that motivation for pursuing other kinds of consequences can be exploited by the teacher or person in authority. It may be useful to ask the identified "n'er do well", or a representative group of peers, to recommend 'fair, equitable and relevant' consequences. This may also be used as a learning activity concerning justice and democracy.

39. Reinterpret adult limits as protections

Contrary to the belief of some adolescents, rules are not an idle invention of malicious adults. Rules are, in fact, guides that can serve to protect the well-being of many individuals, though often this may not be self-evident. Rules in school are designed, for the most part, to help insure the occurrence of learning instead of chaos. Students need to understand that effective learning is in their best interest, and that rules increase the chances of this happening equitably with large groups. Lord of the Flies (Golden) is a dramatic example of the chaos that can ensue in a society with no rules.

40. Leave responsibility for change with the student

If someone is going to change their behavior, it will be important for that individual to take some initiative in the change-process.

As much as anything else, 'changing' involves an attitude of personal-accountability, or responsibility. Teachers can identify areas of needed change; and possible ways of trying to change. They cannot, however, force anyone to effectively change in the absence of willingness.

41. Allow students to experience natural and logical consequences of their behavior

Experience is possibly the most effective teacher of all. Many children have learned that fires are hot by sticking out a hand. This seems to have more of an impact than verbal warnings.

This sort of learning experience is less clear-cut, of course, in the context of school responsibilities. What is the natural and logical consequence of leaving one's seat during a learning activity? The following example helps to clarify the meaning of natural and logical consequences.

Nick (CA = 5) wants to go outside and play ball with a friend. He puts sneakers on without socks, and you tell him to put socks on or he'll get blisters on his feet. He objects further, claiming he had blisters once a long time ago and they didn't hurt. What do you do now in order to 'drive your point home'?

- a) tell him he can't go outside
- b) tell him to do what he wants and later punish him for not wearing socks
- c) continue to argue using your logic
- d) allow him to go outside and risk getting blisters
- e) punish him for arguing with you